

NORTH PARK MINI-PARK & ASSOCIATED STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Engineering & Capital Projects Department, Architectural Engineering & Parks

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2: PRELIMINARY CONCEPT REVIEW

November 16, 2011 ♦ 5:30pm – 8:30 p.m.

Jefferson Elementary School, 3770 Utah Street

S U M M A R Y

Introduction

On November 16, 2011, the City of San Diego Engineering & Capital Projects Department convened the second community workshop for the North Park Mini-Park & Associated Streetscape Improvements Project. The purpose of the workshop was to (a.) provide an update on the project and planning process; (b.) review findings from the first community workshop; (c.) affirm the emerging overall concept; (c.) present a potential design program and alternatives for the mini-park and surrounding streetscapes; and (d.) discuss next steps in the design and community engagement process.

Workshop Outreach

To engage the wide range of stakeholders and interests in the community, the City of San Diego employed a multi-pronged outreach approach to notify and engage participants in the workshop, including:

- Distribution of a workshop notice to approximately 1,100 property owners and tenants surrounding the study area;
- Distribution of a press release to local organizations including:
 - Neighborhood media outlets,
 - community based organizations, and
 - planning groups and committees;
- Display of the workshop notice on community boards and storefronts; and
- Direct communications with key stakeholders such as Jefferson Elementary School officials, property owners within the study area, and other related City departments.

Workshop Format

Approximately 40 community members attended the open house and workshop in the gymnasium/assembly area of Jefferson Elementary School, 3770 Utah Street, San Diego. Upon signing-in, participants received an agenda and

comment card booklet for submitting written comments from the workshop.

The first hour of the workshop featured an open house format where community members browsed project posters of the emerging design alternatives for the mini-park and surrounding streetscapes. Project team members including representatives from the Engineering and Capital Projects department as well as planning consultants MIG, Inc. answered participants' questions and discussed feedback.

Andy Pendoley of MIG served as workshop facilitator and initiated the proceedings by welcoming participants and providing an overview of the workshop objectives and agenda. He then introduced Todd Schmit, Park Designer with the Engineering & Capital Projects Department, Architectural Engineering & Parks Division, who introduced himself as project manager for the project before providing a brief overview of the project purpose and background.

Mr. Pendoley introduced Mukul Malhotra, Director of Urban Design and Principal with MIG, who presented a slideshow with an update on the planning process including the initial community engagement activities completed to-date, as well as the major activities that are forthcoming including one additional community workshop. He also presented an analysis of the feedback from the first community workshop including the improvements and design elements proposed by each of the breakout groups, as well as the emerging design framework and potential alternatives for the Mini-park and surrounding streetscapes. Finally, he oriented participants to the comment booklet for feedback on the emerging design framework, alternatives and implementation strategies.

Mr. Malhotra paused at key points throughout the presentation, and Mr. Pendoley facilitated discussions with participants about their reactions to the findings and design alternatives. During these discussions, project team members responded to questions, and Mr. Malhotra recorded participants' comments on a large wall graphic. These comments combined with comments submitted by participants are summarized below.

Overarching

Participants discussed their thoughts on the overarching design framework and program elements

- Address security needs through programming and design of the mini-park
 - Setting appropriate operating hours
 - Providing adequate night lighting
- Maintain traffic circulation routes for the North Park Parking Garage

- Preserving existing circulation patterns for cars
- Consider providing valet parking
- Addressing special events parking needs, particularly peak pre- and post-event periods
- Avoid restricting access to the garage
- Install new wayfinding
- Consider allowing reverse entry to the garage
- Consider providing retail opportunities
- Provide the right amount of vegetation
- Study potential noise and sound from mini-park activities
- Discourage inappropriate uses from younger community members
- Preserve service access for the theatre
- Improve the site beyond the existing parking lot uses
- Identify realistic maintenance plans and budgets

Streets

Participants discussed the streetscape improvements and design elements.

- Calm traffic, possibly using speed bumps
- Address on-street parking needs and opportunities
 - Consider parking needs for Jefferson Elementary School (i.e., teachers and staff)
 - Balance the community's mixed desires for more and less on-street parking
 - Provide parking for small business access
 - Maximize parking through diagonal head-in on both sides of North Park Way
 - Increase diagonal parking on streets to recoup lost parking
 - Balance parking allocation with mini-park needs
 - Consider available capacity in the parking garage before providing parking spaces for the mini-park
- Ensure that all short term paint solutions are appropriate to San Diego
- Consider maintaining asphalt street materials in front of the garage on 29th Street

Mini-Park

Participants discussed the mini-park improvements and design elements.

- Storm water drainage improvements
 - Study the value and benefit of using turf and/or permeable paving
- Vendors
 - Allow vendors as a way to activate the park
 - Structure agreements to maintain and generate revenue for the park
 - Provide a café

- Sustainability
 - Promote low water maintenance
 - Generate energy at the park, such as through solar panels
- Turf
 - Attracts multiple users and is characteristic of San Diego parks
 - Consider artificial turf as a more inviting material
 - Focus the design as an urban space, not as a neighborhood park
- Storage & restrooms
 - Consider installing restrooms for comfort
 - Provide storage under a platform/stage area
 - Provide an utility area to accommodate the dumpsters for adjacent businesses
 - Provide a storage building next to dry cleaner
- Stage
 - Position the stage facing east against Granada Avenue.
 - Design to accommodate a portable stage
- Program
 - Reassess the heavy amount of proposed programming
 - Consider providing a multi-purpose open space
 - Study the opportunity for a BMX skateboard park
 - Provide a place to dance
- Alternative A
 - Pursue a multi-purpose program and design
- Alternative B
 - Apply the curvilinear design
 - Consider avoiding use of turf
 - Advance the proposed 29th Street design concept

Next Steps & Close

Mr. Schmit closed the workshop by thanking participants for their time and encouraging their attendance at the next upcoming community workshop.